

‘In this last tempest’: Modernising Shakespeare’s *Tempest* on Film

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Though its supernatural spectacles might seem to suit it to the magical technologies of cinema, *The Tempest* has tended to resist direct translation to film. This resistance may derive from other features of the text. The play’s large-scale spectacle is balanced by the small-scale intimacy of many of its scenes, which gives it a character akin to chamber music. Shakespeare’s observance of the theatrical unities generates a rather small number of rather long scenes. The action of the play is premised on a once-only occasion, the opportunity offered to Prospero by Fortune to recover his dukedom. As they orchestrate the play’s action and mount its marvellous spectacles, Prospero and Ariel show an acute sense of their immediate audience, whose critical applause they are intent on winning. All these features suit the text to the live theatre rather than the cinema. Even the two film versions of the past twenty years that may be said to retain Shakespeare’s plot and words use them very freely: Derek Jarman’s *The Tempest* (1979) radically reorders the play’s action, while Peter Greenaway’s *Prospero’s Books* (1991) assigns almost all the speeches to Prospero.

An alternative response to the challenge of screening the Shakespearean text has been adaptation. *Forbidden Planet* (dir. Fred Wilcox, 1956) and *Tempest* (dir. Paul Mazursky, 1982) retell the story or rework the myth of *The Tempest* in a new guise. Mazursky settled for an adaptation, indeed, only after a prolonged attempt to plan a version that adhered to Shakespeare’s text.¹ The decision to adapt brings its losses,

¹ See Walter R. Coppedge, ‘Mazursky’s *Tempest*: Something Rich, Something Strange,’ *Literature/Film Quarterly*, 21 (1993), 18-24. For a perceptive brief overview of film versions of *The Tempest*, presented in relentlessly snappy prose, see Harlan Kennedy, ‘Prospero’s Flicks,’ *Film Comment*, 28, 1 (1992), 45-49.

such as the transformation in both films of Shakespeare's language into an idiom that is by comparison banal. When Shakespeare's Gonzalo meditates on the oddities of Prospero's isle or the constitution of an ideal commonwealth, his ideas may be derivative and muddled but they are rendered elegantly: 'nature should bring forth / Of it own kind all foison, all abundance / To feed my innocent people.'² The Gonzalo of *Forbidden Planet* steps from his spaceship and rhapsodises prosaically on the planet Altair: 'Look at the colour of that sky ... a man could learn to live here and to love it.' The Gonzalo of *Tempest* is Dolores (Lucianne Buchanan), an apostle of the New Age and, surely, a Californian fallen in among the film's New Yorkers: 'It's a miracle; I'll have to write a book. ... Don't you wish we could stay here for ever?'

Adaptation enables, on the other hand, a wide-ranging reimagining of Shakespeare's dramatic expedients, such as magic, and his themes, such as the Renaissance discovery of the 'New World' or the authority of the Renaissance prince and patriarch. One pleasure the films offer is the recognition of such original Shakespearean features in their modern cinematic guise. This activity of recognition affords the modern audience its equivalent to the Renaissance pleasure in 'imitation,' the reimagining of classical texts in a Renaissance guise, like Donne's love elegies in imitation of Ovid and Jonson's verse epistles in imitation of Horace. Even the drab language of the film adaptations plays its part in this process, producing a *discordia concors* in which the audience recognises at once the congruence between the dramatic situations in play and film and the incongruity between the language in which they are treated.

Forbidden Planet dresses Shakespeare in the guise of the 1950s sci-fi movie. Renaissance magic is translated into breathtakingly advanced technologies, and the newly

² The text cited is *The Tempest*, ed. Stephen Orgel (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987).

discovered America of the Renaissance is translated into a planet of a galaxy far away. In writing *The Tempest* it seems likely that Shakespeare sought to exploit the advanced theatrical machinery and facilities that may have been on offer at the Blackfriars theatre, recently leased by his company.³ If so, his project is answered by the striking special effects created for *Forbidden Planet*—the flight deck of its spacecraft, the stupendous underground machinery of the Krell, and the irrepressible robot Robby. Mazursky's *Tempest* rewrites Shakespeare's play as domestic drama and as a wry reconsideration of the America that is idealised in the writings that Shakespeare drew on in his *Tempest*. Mazursky's Prospero, Phillip (John Cassavetes), seeks to revive the magic that has vanished from his life. In accordance with the film's mode of bourgeois domesticity, this magic is retrieved primarily through love. Paradoxically, too, mystery and magic arise out of the very ordinariness and awkwardness of human beings. People's changing humours and moods and needs are the film's version of the mysterious transformations of *The Tempest*: 'Those are pearls that were his eyes ...'

Forbidden Planet begins on a patrolling space ship of the United Planets. The ship has been ordered to visit the planet Altair in order to investigate the welfare of a party of space travellers that has landed there but not been heard from since. The ship's crew finds a peaceful milieu with just two human occupants, Doctor Morbius (Walter Pidgeon), the film's Prospero, who styles himself 'a simple scholar' and seeks only seclusion, and his daughter Altaira (Anne Francis), the film's Miranda, a blonde 1950s bobbysoxer in a scanty Grecian tunic.⁴ They are attended by Robby the robot, the film's serviceable Ariel. Altair is to all appearances an ideal world. Like the

³ Keith Sturgess, *Jacobean Private Theatre* (London: Routledge, 1987), ch. 5.

⁴ By some scripting discontinuity, the film appears to vacillate between calling her Altaira and Alta.

inhabitants of the unfallen Eden, Alta plays with pet deer and a tame tiger. Innocently naked, she swims in a pool: 'Full fathom five thy father lies.' There is however a dark mystery below the placid surface of life on Altair. Morbius explains why only he and his daughter live on the planet. A 'dark, terrible, incomprehensible, planetary force' vaporised the spaceship of the original party and killed all except Morbius, his wife, and his daughter; his wife died subsequently. This mysterious and terrible destruction is the film's first version of the tempest.

The disclosure of the mystery is implicated with the role of Alta. In due course, this Miranda finds her Ferdinand among the ship's crew. Her version of 'O brave new world,' comes as she surveys the crew: 'You're lovely, doctor—of course the two end ones are unbelievable.' Alta is the classic sexual prize, 1950s style, provocatively naive, alluring but innocent. Scenes of flagrant political incorrectness see her undergo an education in sexual roles and sexual etiquette. This education centres on her learning to kiss, a practice that at first she finds silly but that she rapidly comes to enjoy. The moment this happens, frightening consequences follow. Alta's tame tiger unexpectedly turns on her, and the destructive planetary force begins again to operate. First it sabotages the spaceship's equipment, then it kills one of the officers. Finally, in another version of the tempest that destroys the ship in the first scene of Shakespeare's play, the force strikes the spaceship itself, disabling important items of its equipment. The force is invisible and disembodied. Against it the Commander's high-tech weaponry is powerless, as the swords of Ferdinand (1.2) and of Alonso and Sebastian (3.3) are powerless against Prospero's magic.

What is this invisible force? In his study, Morbius relates to senior members of the spaceship's crew the story of his experience on the planet. This is the film's version of Prospero's retrospective narrative in the second scene of Shakespeare's play. Where however that narrative establishes Prospero's authority and argues his innocence, this one reveals truths about Morbius that he has not comprehended and exposes

his responsibility for the film's past and present disasters. Altair, explains Morbius, was once the home of a mighty and noble race, the Krell. Their civilization was far in advance of human civilization. They had amassed vast knowledge and power (including the power to travel to Earth and bring back specimens of deer and tigers). They had even learned to overcome what Morbius calls their own baser instincts. Then, on the threshold of supreme accomplishment, 'the whole race vanished in a single night.' Morbius, who is a philologist by training, was able to read the Krell records and has been able to utilise their surviving technology, including a device for expanding the capacity of the brain, in order to raise himself to their level of intellect and knowledge. He is thus able to accomplish the greatest of all the Krell's feats, the ability to 'transcend physical instrumentality,' to transform his own mental impulses directly into reality.

It is just this amazing ability that turns out to be the source of the terrible threat, the reason why the Krell perished, and why Morbius's party perished, and why the attacks are occurring again. The mind, however well educated, cannot in fact suppress its 'baser instincts.' When given the ability to transform their thoughts and wishes into reality, both the Krell and Doctor Morbius engineer calamity. It falls to the Commander of the spaceship (Leslie Nielsen) to explain the process. Using the Freudian paradigm and vocabulary whose authority went unquestioned in the 1950s, the Commander explains that 'the Krell forgot one thing: the monsters from the id.' There is a textbook literalness about the film's obeisance to Freud, as it reworks and puts a Freudian spin on the possessiveness of Shakespeare's Prospero towards Miranda and his hostility towards Ferdinand. As it was Morbius's unruly passions, his jealousy or ambition, that destroyed his earlier companions so (as the audience sees) it is his jealousy at losing Alta to another man that brings back the destructive force at this moment. Like Prospero the magician, Morbius has the power to act out his wishes. But whereas Prospero has the autonomy of the Renaissance moral subject and can make the conscious

choice of forgiveness over vengeance, Morbius is driven by unconscious psychological forces to destructive ends.

As the Commander explains, however advanced we may be in knowledge or technology, we still have a subconscious, 'the beast, the mindless primitive . . . the secret devil of every soul on the planet.' In short, we still have Caliban. The peaceful planet of the film's opening is ruled by and manifests the superego of Morbius. But Morbius, like all of us, carries within himself his own Caliban: 'Morbius, that thing out there—it's you.' Morbius's anagnorisis corresponds to the recognition of the Freudian analysand: 'I must be guilty.' It corresponds also to Prospero's recognition: 'this thing of darkness I / Acknowledge mine.' When he acknowledges this truth about himself Morbius is able to renounce his power: 'I deny you! I give you up!' Like Prospero drowning his staff and his book, Morbius destroys the Krell technology by setting off a chain reaction. Unlike Prospero, Morbius remains on the planet while all the others leave, and the audience sees his planet explode. After such knowledge, what forgiveness?

The re-imagining of the Caliban theme in *Forbidden Planet* expands beyond its Freudian framework, or the film uses that framework to propound a wider historical vision, as Freud himself did in his later writings on civilization. *The Tempest* of 1610 was written under the impact of the new age of European empire. *Forbidden Planet* of 1956 was written under the impact of the new age of nuclear energy, and in particular nuclear warfare. The vast power harnessed and unleashed by the Krell and by Morbius entails an overwhelming menace. The audience of the 1950s might well ask, is the human race in our day any better equipped than the Krell were in their day to handle the power we have discovered? If the monsters of the id—ambition or greed or envy—rule us, our whole race too might perish in a single night. Morbius describes the fall of the Krell in an eloquent version of Prospero's speech, 'Our revels now are ended.' Morbius's speech might also be an elegy for the cities and skyscrapers of the mid-twentieth century after nuclear war: of all its 'cloud-piercing towers of glass and porcelain and

adamantine steel ... nothing, absolutely nothing, remains above ground.'

The parallel between Morbius's elegy for the Krell and Prospero's meditation on his masque sets the film's treatment of history in another light again. Prospero's masque of Ceres, like the Jacobean court masques that it simulates, invokes a perfect world, from which the unruly Venus and Cupid and winter's inconvenience have been excluded, and in which plentiful harvests are assured. The mutinous incursion of Caliban and his auxiliaries, though not really capable of threatening Prospero's control, comes as a reminder that no such perfect worlds exist. It is this reminder that so troubles Prospero's old brain and prompts him to dissolve the masque, to reject its allure of an impossible perfection, and to instruct Ferdinand in the power of mutability.⁵ Though Prospero refers, here and elsewhere, to the threat from Caliban, the greater threat comes from his brother Antonio, which it is more difficult for Prospero to acknowledge and to overcome. Prospero's decision to drown his book and his staff eventually acknowledges the insufficiency or impossibility of his own project to perfect a flawed humanity. *Forbidden Planet* reenacts for the America of the 1950s this conflict between an ideal of perfectibility and a countervailing, irremediable imperfection. The impossibly perfect world of the Krell is also the dream of America itself. The primary version of this dream is the new Eden envisaged in America by Renaissance writers: 'we smelt so sweet, and so strong a smel, as if we had bene in the midst of some delicate garden ... so full of grapes ... that I thinke in all the world the like abundance is not to be found.' This dream of perfectibility always had its inverse, the recognition that Eden cannot be restored: a 'hidious and desolate wilderness, full of wild beasts and wild men ... the

⁵ Shakespeare engages in his own rewriting of a dramatic form: the 'antimasque' figures of Caliban and his fellow rebels disrupt the main masque, whereas in the masque convention such figures are themselves put to rout by the members of the main masque.

whole countrie, full of woods and thickets, represented a wild and savage hew.⁶

One subtext of *Forbidden Planet* may be this uneasy tension in the idea of America, which has been renewed over and over again in American history. Another subtext may direct the film's unease in a direction more predictable in the Cold War context. The overmastering scientific organisation of the Krell, their faith that the limitations of human nature may be overcome by material means, must in some degree allude to the Marxist experiment and its ideal of the scientific perfectibility of society. Doctor Morbius, egotistical, over-educated, and (most suspicious of all) bearded, is the type of the intellectual who in Cold War movies is always at risk of succumbing to the megalomaniac temptations of Communism. There are a number of indications that the film has a Manichaeian Cold-War perspective. The full disclosure of the potential destruction entailed by the mastery of physical nature occurs only on Altair, the realm of the Krell and of Morbius. The United Planets, though their space programme too must dispose of huge physical resources, are represented in contrast as a stable and peaceful entity. The rebellion theme of Shakespeare's *Tempest* is excluded from the film; the crew of the spaceship contains no greater threat than a couple of irresponsible but apolitical wastrels.⁷ The Commander of the spaceship incorporates much of the authority that in Shakespeare belongs to Prospero. This authority includes the insight of the Freudian psychoanalyst, with its power to conduct Morbius to an understanding of his unconsciously motivated actions. The Commander is arguably more successful in this project than is Prospero in his equivalent

⁶ Arthur Barlowe and William Bradford, quoted in Leo Marx, *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Idea in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), pp. 37, 41.

⁷ The comedy of alcoholic indulgence is supplemented by the comedy of sexual competition among the spaceship's officers for the prize of Alta. Sex performs the function of defusing the film's political impact while also underwriting and modulating in gender terms its imperialist assumptions.

project of inducing repentance in Alonso and Antonio. Authority in this Cold-War context is thus taken out of the hands of the dangerously unpredictable man of learning and entrusted to the reliable military man. The need for such authority receives a classic statement, redolent of the reactionary conservatism of the 1950s: 'we're all part monsters in our subconscious—that's why we have laws and religion.'

It is possible therefore to read the UP as the US, policing and cleansing the world, committed to reason rather than force, and free of contagion from the means that it must utilise. On the other side is the Red menace in the person of Morbius, the man of scientific endowments with an aspiration to remake the world but blinded by his very accomplishments to his innate human flaws. Though the film has these traits of Cold-War allegory, it may be read also as a one-world prophecy, like *The Day the Earth Stood Still* (dir. Robert Wise, 1951). The United Planets may represent a transnational global unity, with horizons wider than those created by the divisions of the Cold War, and offering the promise of an escape from the destruction that must eventually visit a disunited world. Morbius would then be an atavistic figure, representing the old political order; hence the fact that, unlike Prospero returning to his dukedom, Morbius does not return to Earth. From this point of view the concluding explosion of the planet Altair is a warning to earthlings of our own possible doom, and Morbius dies as a sacrificial figure, a scapegoat who exorcises the deep if unacknowledged fears of the Cold-War audience.

As in Shakespeare's *Tempest*, dreams of perfectibility in *Forbidden Planet* have great potency, seductiveness, and imaginative richness. But because they are doomed to disappoint the dreamer, or because they corrupt themselves from within, they must be set aside. In both texts, the strength of the dream and the sharp realisation of its impossibility create together a tragic resonance. In some ways this resonance is stronger in *Forbidden Planet*. In Shakespeare, Prospero has his flaws and blind spots, but the fact of evil is embodied primarily in Caliban and in Antonio. Prospero is forced to recognise his

kinship with both: 'this thing of darkness / I acknowledge mine'; 'You, brother mine, ... I do forgive thee, / Unnatural though thou art.' In *Forbidden Planet* the Prospero figure carries the evil within himself, hence his name Morbius, which combines words for death (*mors*) and life (*bios*), as well as carrying overtones of disease (*morbus*).

Mazursky's *Tempest* (1982) alludes in more detail to Shakespeare's *Tempest* than does *Forbidden Planet*, often to crisply witty effect, though overall the film is not without its *longueurs*. Mazursky's rewriting begins by effecting two very significant large-scale changes to Shakespeare's text. In accordance with the film's modern location and bourgeois milieu, the lack of women in Shakespeare's version is redressed. The protagonist's brother Antonio becomes his wife Antonia (Gena Rowlands). Ariel metamorphoses into Aretha (Susan Sarandon) and Gonzalo into Dolores, who for good measure is paired off with the film's Caliban. This recasting of *The Tempest* recalls nothing so much as the Dryden-Davenant version of 1667, rewritten for Restoration tastes, with additions such as Miranda's sister Dorinda and Prospero's ward Hippolito and the marriage of these two characters. Mazursky also restructures the play by supplying a fuller version of life before the island than is to be found in Shakespeare. By the use of flashbacks, the film moves back and forth between its Mediterranean island, in Greece, and its version of Prospero's Milan, which is New York City. The flashbacks are Mazursky's cinematic version of Prospero's long retrospective narration to Miranda in *The Tempest*, 1.2. For Prospero, his exile is entirely the result of his brother's wickedness. Though the theatre audience may feel that this is not the whole story, they are vouchsafed little solid information and are situated like Miranda, with her shadowy memories of 'Four or five women once that tended me.' In *Tempest* the information is very much denser and the audience's reactions more variegated. Mazursky's Prospero, Phillip, is far from being the innocent victim of treachery, but he is nonetheless a man who suffers;

the film introduces the wife from whom he estranges himself, but who for her part betrays him; Miranda (Molly Ringwald) witnesses the estrangement of her parents and experiences her own sense of betrayal but retains the simple outlook and preferences of an adolescent; even Phillip's father (Paul Stewart) puts in a cameo appearance.

Within this new framework, Mazursky engineers neat examples of *discordia concors* in his imitation of Shakespeare. There is a network of allusions to the theatricality of *The Tempest*. Antonia is an actress and Aretha a nightclub singer. Miranda's immature body and cropped hair give her an androgynous quality, recalling the fact that a boy actor would have played Miranda on Shakespeare's stage. On his Mediterranean island Phillip sets about rebuilding a ruined Greek theatre. The dances of Shakespeare's masques also have their equivalents. Phillip embarrasses everyone at a party of his wife's when he expresses his complex of constraint and aggressiveness by trying to dance with her (male) producer—a clumsy antimasque. He revels with a Dionysiac dance when the tempest hits the island. A communal banquet with dancing celebrates the reconciliations achieved at the film's climax. As Shakespeare quotes Montaigne and toys with Renaissance theatrical conventions and genres such as the classical unities or magus plays, so Mazursky toys with modern film conventions. *Tempest* draws primarily on the traditional, middle-of-the-road, Hollywood family drama: Robert Redford's *Ordinary People* (1980) is an example close in date. This style is crossed by examples of zaniness and caricature and by the movie musical, most memorably in the scene where Aretha and Miranda engage in synchronised swimming while singing 'Why Do Fools Fall in Love?', a tribute at once to Esther Williams and to 'Full fathom five.'⁸

⁸ For another discussion of Mazursky's adaptation, with particular emphasis on the role of Philip and on contemporary debates about colonialism, see Peggy A. Knapp, 'Reinhabiting Prospero's Island: Cassavetes' *Tempest*,' in *Transformations: From Literature to Film*, ed.

Mazursky's Prospero, Phillip, is a successful New York architect—a fabricator, that is to say, of cloud-capped towers and gorgeous palaces. He works for Mr Alonzo (Vittorio Gassman), a casino owner and classic movie Mafioso, who is attended, like a Renaissance prince in his court, not only by his architect but also by his doctor and his comedian or court jester. Phillip begins the film in the throes of a midlife crisis, the successful man now questioning his ideas of success. He is worried about age and illness; he is bored; he is angry, alienated, and socially erratic; he lives in a stylish but sterile apartment; he is haunted by nightmares. Phillip may not be a magician, but he is looking for a 'magic' that has departed from his life. The film rewrites the situation of the Duke of Milan, who absented himself from his subjects and his duties through his obsession with study. Phillip, the 'king of hi-tech' as he ruefully calls himself, is isolated and trapped by the world that his technological magic has created. One result is the irate temper and dictatorial ways that he never loses, that magnify Prospero's mildly choleric character, and that make Phillip an unsympathetic protagonist.

Phillip's wife, Antonia, reenacts the treachery of Prospero's brother, Antonio. Where Antonio formed a political alliance with Alonso against Prospero, Antonia enters a sexual liaison with Mr Alonzo. It is Antonia's infidelity that drives Phillip to leave for Greece. This is a voluntary, not a forced, exile, on which Miranda accompanies her father for her summer vacation. (Though Phillip thinks of himself as starting out his life again, 'learning to live like human beings,' his Greek sojourn turns out to be more like a vacation. In contrast to Prospero's twelve years of exile, Phillip's exile will occupy only the length of a Mediterranean summer.) In Greece Phillip meets his Ariel, Aretha. As Ariel is a wish-fulfilment spirit who can do anything Prospero asks, so Aretha is a wish-fulfilment woman for the crisis-ridden man. On their first meeting, she leaves Phillip her address and the key to her room. She is

Douglas Radcliff-Umstead (Kent, Ohio: Romance Languages Department, Kent State University, 1987), pp. 46-54.

understanding, humorous, tolerant, sexually available, and emotionally undemanding. She offers all these magical gifts not out of slavery or contractual obligation, like Ariel, but out of the humanity that Ariel does not possess. Offered the gift of Aretha, Phillip decides with characteristic perversity to practise sexual abstinence. Sex is not the answer: the film toys with the possibility of assuming the contours of a classic movie love story, but it does not. Phillip's celibacy is an attempt to do without the satisfactions that have ceased to satisfy him, a discipline that is his version of Prospero's discipline as a magician.

As proof that her devotion and service match Ariel's, Aretha is understanding even about Phillip's celibacy, and it is Aretha who knows of the island where she and Phillip and Miranda cannot be found by the rich and powerful Mr Alonzo. There they encounter a sole occupant, Kalibanos (Raul Julia). In a reminiscence of Shakespeare's taste for anachronisms (which he does not in fact display in *The Tempest*), Kalibanos lives in a cave and keeps goats, like a figure from Theocritus' pastoral poetry, but he also has a television set, wears deodorant, and, in a 1980s version of the slave mentality, longs for his island to become a tourist destination.⁹ An over-the-top version of Shakespeare's Caliban, Kalibanos continually ogles Miranda and tries to seduce her. When he does finally lay a hand on her, Phillip fights him, throws him overboard from a boat, but then rescues him, saying 'I'm not a god; I'm a monkey just like you.' Phillip is here the perpetrator of violence against Kalibanos, not, like Prospero, the victim of Caliban's intended violence. The violence is prevented not by the powers of the Renaissance magus but by everyday magic, an act of self-recognition: 'this thing of darkness / I acknowledge mine.'

Eventually Mr Alonzo and his party sail accidentally into the vicinity of Phillip's island and Phillip succeeds in calling up a storm. Only at the end of the film, therefore, does

⁹ Like a figure from pastoral playing on his pipe, Kalibanos too plays the clarinet: 'the isle is full of noises.'

Shakespeare's opening tempest break. Phillip's power to call up the tempest seems to result from his conservation of his sexual powers; it also perhaps results from his determination in spite of everything to discover a magic in his life: 'show me the magic' is his choric refrain. The incursion of a literal magic into the realistic mode of *Tempest* is undoubtedly strained. As elsewhere in the film, magic is evoked more satisfyingly in everyday events. There is a magical underwater meeting between Miranda and her Ferdinand, Mr Alonzo's son Freddy (Sam Robards), a surfer and scuba-diver.¹⁰ The princedom that Freddy offers Miranda is the everyday life of an American teenager (albeit a wealthy one). Miranda quizzes Freddy about the brave new world of teenage trends; she confesses that she is a virgin as shamefacedly as Prospero's Miranda would have confessed that she was not one.

The film ends in reconciliation. Aretha advises Phillip that it is 'time to forgive', as Ariel counsels Prospero. Phillip not only bestows forgiveness, like Prospero, he also asks forgiveness of Antonia and of Kalibanos. There is another startling moment of violence, again perpetrated by Phillip, who kills a goat for the communal feast. Antonia has told Phillip that she had wanted him to show himself willing to make a sacrifice, and this is his somewhat evasive fulfilment of her wish. The act has other possible meanings. It is the culmination and perhaps the exorcism of Phillip's attempt to live out the dream of an archaic life. It enacts and perhaps assuages the anger that has driven him for much of the action. It represents what is perhaps his most difficult task, 'sacrificing' Miranda, the child whose transition to adulthood he finds it difficult to accept.

If the most notable feature of *Forbidden Planet* is its revision of the Caliban theme, in *Tempest* it is the revision of the New

¹⁰As a naturalisation of Ferdinand, 'Freddy' also recalls the German prince Frederick, the Elector Palatine, who married the princess Elizabeth, daughter of King James I, in May 1613. Shakespeare's *Tempest* was performed at court as part of the celebrations of this wedding: see E.K. Chambers, *William Shakespeare: A Study of Facts and Problems* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1930), ii, 343.

World theme. The island of Shakespeare's *Tempest* is located physically in the Mediterranean, but much of its symbolic potency, as well as aspects of the play's action, derive from the Renaissance encounter with the Americas. In Mazursky's version, American and European exchange places. Specifically, the twentieth-century world-city, New York, changes places with the Renaissance city-state, Milan. The Utopian destination for generations of old world immigrants, New York now becomes a dystopia to be fled. From this point of view, Phillip's flight from new world to old reverses the trajectory of Shakespeare's play from old world to new. But there is another, complementary point of view in both actions. The Mediterranean element in Shakespeare's *Tempest* and its recapitulation of the narrative of Virgil's *Aeneid* directs the play towards an older world, a place of cultural origins, as well as towards a new. Phillip's Mediterranean parentage likewise makes his Mediterranean sojourn a return to a place of origins, not a remote exile. In its adaptation of Shakespeare's geography, Mazursky's film is a reprise of the quest in Henry James's novels, in which the culturally impoverished American seeks an ideal civilization in Europe. 'We're learning to live like human beings,' declares Phillip. His education is not however conducted in the London town houses or Tuscan villas that civilize (and also subtly corrupt) James's subjects. Phillip embraces instead the simple life of the Mediterranean peasant or artisan. In rebuilding his island's theatre he rediscovers the origins of his own profession as architect and of his wife's art as actress. Where Prospero fabricates courtly masques by magical means, Phillip goes back to the basics of making a theatre through patient, back-breaking labour. To be exact, his Ariel, his Miranda, and his Caliban perform the labour, under Phillip's supervision, since he never educates himself out of his dictatorial and patriarchal habits.

Despite Phillip's enthusiasm for the old-world experience, his Mediterranean island does not in fact model an ideal civilization. For the Renaissance, the inhabitants of the Americas proved to manifest not a plenitude of virtue and an absence of vice but simply a different compound of virtues and

of vices.¹¹ Hence it was possible for Prospero's island to harbour Caliban. No less disillusioning, Phillip's island lodges Kalibanos. The difference, again, is that Kalibanos is not a creature of the new world enslaved by the old but of the old world enslaved by the new. As Caliban was entranced by Prospero's gifts ('Water with berries in't' and language), so Kalibanos is a fan of *Gunsmoke*, which he watches on a Sony Trinitron in his cave. That is to say, Kalibanos renews the old dream that America, in this case the mythical American frontier of the TV Western, offers the saving simplicity and virtue that Phillip dreams of connecting with in the Mediterranean. Kalibanos's dream is however falsified by the very American commercial culture that delivers it. (Moreover, in a further hint at the revolution of the times, the Japanese commercial culture of the Sony corporation supports and in its turn threatens the American hegemony.) The degraded native of the Mediterranean is all too happy to surrender or sell his heritage for the tourist dollar. In the 1980s version of *The Tempest*, tourism is the instrument of an American cultural and political hegemony that reverses the trajectory of the European imperialism initiated in Shakespeare's age (and for which the model invoked in Shakespeare's *Tempest* had been in turn Virgil's Rome). Recapitulating Montaigne on the Americans, Dolores at least finds Kalibanos 'attractive in a third world sort of way,' and in the film's climactic celebrations she pairs off with him, the only person on whom his clumsy seductions are successful.

For characters other than Kalibanos, America is home. Aretha's situation is the most complicated. A longer-term exile from America, she possibly has some traits of the Jamesian quester, though she shows no idealised expectations about the old-world experience. As Ariel has served more than one

¹¹'We may then well call them barbarous, in regard of reasons rules, but not in respect of us that exceed them in all kinde of barbarisme': Michel de Montaigne, 'Of the Caniballes,' in *The Essayes of Montaigne: John Florio's Translation*, Introduction by J.I.M. Stewart (New York: Modern Library, 1933), p. 167.

master, Aretha has unsuccessfully married an Israeli and then a Greek psychiatrist (the film's witty modernisation of the witch Sycorax). Elusive as Ariel, she lives in several worlds. Miranda's situation is the simplest: she wants only to go back and reclaim her heritage as that twentieth-century princess, an American teenager. The film duly ends with Phillip and his family flying in to Manhattan by helicopter. The New York to which they return projects double-edged possibilities similar to the ending of Shakespeare's play. In *The Tempest*, Prospero resumes his dukedom with a deepened wisdom and realism, and with the hopefulness that is embodied in the marriage of Miranda and Ferdinand. But he returns also in the company of Antonio, the treacherous brother who remains obstinately unrepentant and is thus a threat to the harmony of the play's ending. In *Tempest*, the Manhattan skyline casts the allure of another magic island, while at the same time evoking the crowdedness, complications, and suffering of its inhabitants' actual lives. 'The City's clamour could never spoil / The dreams of a boy and goil; / We'll turn Manhattan into an isle of joy': with a Shakespearean doubleness, the *faux-naïf* song that accompanies the film's ending expresses both our propensity to hope and an awareness of the flimsiness of our hope.